

Have pet lovers' pledge

REFER to "PAWS: Don't buy pets for fun" (*The Star*, Feb 23), and find it really sad to read that pets are being dumped. In most cases, what started as a passionate union and sadly ending up in this manner can be attributed to irresponsibility as well as ignorance on the part of the owners.

This shows lack of farsightedness, consideration, or evaluation of ownership prior to purchasing or picking a pet.

Apart from dumping, we have also heard of cases of pets being abused.

Not too long ago a *YouTube* posting that went viral showed a lovely poodle being mercilessly beaten for not responding well to an order to sit. That was indeed very painful to watch, not to mention the pain the poor poodle had to endure.

There are probably many more pet abuse cases

that have gone unnoticed or which happened behind closed doors.

It is good that once in a while articles of such nature surface to remind pet owners of their responsibilities, but I view this as not sufficient to arrest the incidence of dumping and abuse of pets.

Since there are no legal boundaries on animal dumping, the best that can be done is some form of pre-ownership education.

I would like to suggest that pet lovers associations jointly come out with a booklet for owners-to-be. Its contents can be on the responsibilities of pet owners, advice on pet care and also emotional aspect of pets.

In the booklet there can also be a pledge on commitment to his or her pet which the owner-to-be signs.

Although the pledge will not have any legal

implications, it will nevertheless be a commitment on the owners' part.

The booklet has to be attractively designed in the form of a collectors' item in order encourage any willingness to sign up.

Here, of course the cooperation of pet shops is the key in helping to extend and explain the booklet to their customers. Most pet shop owners are pet lovers and this will be a matter close to their heart. I believe they will be enthusiastic.

In the area of distribution of the booklets, I believe many pet food or products suppliers will be willing to assist.

It is about raising awareness on responsibilities on pet owning and to would-be owners to think hard before taking in one.

K.T. TEH,
Kuala Lumpur.